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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language April 25 dailies focused news coverage on Taiwan's Supreme Court not guilty verdict for President-elect Ma Ying-jeou in his special allowance case; on Taipei Deputy Mayor Samuel Wu's resignation amid allegations that he received money from an arms dealer; on AIT Director Stephen Young's participation in Taiwan's annual Yushan crisis drill; and on the speculation that former White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card will lead the United States delegation to Ma's inauguration. The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" ran a banner headline on page four that said "To Congratulate Ma on Inauguration, the United States Might Send Former White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card to Lead the Delegation." The China Times also carried Card's bio and another story on the complex connection between Ma's wish to visit the United States and the United States' decision to appoint Card to lead the delegation.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an opinion in the pro-unification "United Daily News" criticized Taiwan's annual Yushan crisis drill for being "unprofessional" and the DPP government's decision to allow AIT Director Stephen Young to enter the Yuanshan command center as compromising Taiwan's national dignity. An editorial in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" urged Taiwan to reestablish its strategy in foreign affairs by emphasizing Taiwan's advantages in culture and democracy. End summary.

A) "The Yushan Crisis Drill Is Unprofessional"

KMT Legislator Ting Shou-chung opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (4/25):

"Scenarios in the Yushan crisis drill are decided by [Taiwan's] National Security Council. However, from the aspects of crisis management and military, [the scenarios] are totally unprofessional.

"Crisis management is meant to foresee the future but cannot go against reality. The purpose of an exercise is to verify contingency plans and conduct training in times of peace. Objectives of an exercise have to include various simultaneous factors including a constantly changing external environment, conditions, capabilities, and technology - rather than groundless imagination. [The scenario that simulates] China's surprise attacks on [Taiwan's] east coast in 2020 is unrealistic. Surprise military attacks normally target command, control, communication, and intelligence systems. In the real Persian Gulf wars and the Chinese Communists' planning for acupuncture warfare, communications and power grids are listed as the first target. It is impossible [for China's military] to attack [Taiwan's] east coast at the beginning [of a conflict]. ...

"What is more absurd is that the Yushan crisis drill practiced aiding Americans to evacuate their nationals. In real examples of

various countries, whenever [a country] is involved in a military conflict, it regards the evacuation of expatriates as a strike against its troops and civilians' morale, and it is a taboo which will reduce the international community's concern [about the country]. To our surprise, Taiwan has this kind of item for verification in the drill. Also, while Taiwan's representative to the United States is unable to pass through the door of the [United States] State Department, AIT Director Stephen Young can drive straight into the supremely critical Yuanshan command center. Our country's diplomacy compromises on reciprocal national dignity a bit too much."

B) "Diplomatic Challenges that [Taiwan's] New Government Faces"

The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (4/25):

"Washington ...in the end is not allowing [Taiwan's President-elect] Ma Ying-jeou to visit the United States. However, after all that, it is raising the level of the special envoy who will attend [Ma's] inauguration ceremony. [The United States] on the one hand maintains a perspective on international reality and on the other hand is expressing its goodwill to, and its expectations of, [Taiwan's] new government. Similarly, the international community also expects that Taiwan's diplomacy will return to rationality and pragmatism. How to rebuild the diplomatic strategies to protect Taiwan's survival, development, sovereignty and dignity will be a serious topic for the new government. ...

"Taiwan's diplomatic predicament results from a wide gap in power between both sides [of the Taiwan Strait] and China's insistence on a zero-sum game. We, being a weak power, have to try our best to strengthen ourselves and accumulate bargaining chips to earn a minimum space for survival and the status of sovereignty in the international community. It is regrettable that [the work of Taiwan's] diplomacy has been flamboyant and has wasted its

long-cultivated diplomatic resources in the last few years just for the country's leader to show off or to perform electioneering for a certain party. [Taiwan's diplomacy in recent years] used the provocative concept of Taiwan independence to exhaust the international community's sympathy for Taiwan and damage once-close U.S.-Taiwan relations. What Ma is inheriting now is a devastated diplomatic wasteland and he has to irrigate it from scratch again. U.S.-Taiwan relations can be rebuilt quickly. However, [Taiwan's] relations with other countries will need much more effort [to rebuild]. For the first time, it will be a Latin American expert, Francisco Ou, who takes the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. Not only because diplomacy must return to the professionals, but also because Latin America, where our country's diplomatic strategic importance lies, is on fire and [Taiwan] has to fight the fire urgently. ...

"In fact, the major asset that Taiwan has is 'values.' The number of diplomatic allies we have is not to be compared with China's. We are short of the required votes to be a member of the United Nations. However, Taiwan, with yet another change in the party in power, has demonstrated that Chinese society can have a free, democratic, open and mature civilization. For countries with mature democracies, the continuing existence of these values [in Taiwan] is very precious and has to be protected.

"Taiwan normally is in touch only with the bitter side of international reality and...does not know how to use [its civil society values] to market itself. Taiwan should focus more [on marketing Taiwan's values] in the future. In order to maintain its survival in the international community, Taiwan will need major countries' support. Public opinion in these countries can be influential in policy-making. If Taiwan's civil society values are recognized in public opinion, governments' foreign policies will have to respond. Many political leaders' decisions not to participate in the relay of the Olympic torch or the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games were based on public opinion and the attendant pressure. The gap in power between Tibet and China is even greater than that between Taiwan and China. Tibet can garner international sympathy, so Taiwan should not underestimate itself. ..."

YOUNG